



NJDOE News

For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:

Beth Auerswald
Richard Vespucci
Kathryn Forsyth, Director
609-292-1126

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Commissioner Davy Announces Opportunity for Districts to Apply For Pilot Program to Implement Personalized Student Learning Plans

Department of Education Commissioner Lucille E. Davy today announced that school districts have until May 15 to apply for the Personalized Student Learning Plan pilot program the department plans to launch during the 2009-2010 school year.

Personalized student learning plans are a component of the department's high school redesign to prepare students for the workforce and college. The plans utilize adult mentors, including parents, teachers and counselors, to help students recognize and achieve their goals.

Fifteen middle and high schools representing the state's diverse student population will be chosen to take part in the two-year trial to implement personalized leaning plans at the 6th- and 9th-grade levels. Each participating district will be required to demonstrate a commitment to the process by developing a school team to design and implement the initiative.

"Personalized learning plans have the potential to engage students, parents and school personnel in the planning and development of the academic career and overall future of each child in New Jersey," said Commissioner Davy. "Coupled with the other elements of our high school transformation, personalized plans will help more students reach their full potential both inside and outside the classroom."

Personalized Student Learning Plans will be studied during the two-year pilot to determine the best path for schools to take in helping students address their individual personal, academic and career development needs and goals.

During the first year of the test period, plans will be utilized for all 6th and 9th graders in the pilot schools. The same students will continue using the plans during the 2010-2011 school year as 7th and 10th graders, while new plans will be created for the incoming students in the two lower grades. DOE will decide after reviewing the pilot program's outcomes whether to recommend that learning plans will be utilized for all New Jersey students from 6th grade through to graduation from high school.

The learning plan formats developed by the pilot districts will include at least the following three areas of development: personal, academic and career. In addition to goal setting, examples of activities that students may engage in while creating and carrying out the plans include:

- Personal Development: survey learning styles; inventory personality and interests.
- Academic Development: select courses for graduation as they relate to interests and skills; discern individual student learning opportunities (internships, and service or independent learning); utilize support services and referrals as needed.
- Career Development: Survey career interests and skills; Engage in career awareness and exploration to heighten understanding of opportunities available and generate interest (6th grade); Carry out career planning and preparation activities while developing academic knowledge and skill readiness (9th grade).

The pilot program will allow DOE to identify sample formats for personalized plans, as well as appropriate curricula, resource materials and assessment practices. Case studies of participating schools and examples of lessons learned from the pilot program will be published to help guide statewide implementation of the program.

"Generations ago, students too often had limited choices for career paths," said Commissioner Davy. "With the vast opportunities that exist today, students need additional support to be able to choose a career path that interests and challenges them. Personalized learning plans help students visualize the possibilities and focus on their goals while engaging children and parents in a productive and proactive manner."

The pilot program is a part of the high school redesign, which is a component of Governor Corzine's commitment to providing all New Jersey children with a quality education.

Additional Information

School districts selected for the pilot program will be notified by June 5; an orientation is scheduled for June 25. Participating districts will be eligible to receive up to \$7,500 for each year of the program to assist with related costs, including curriculum materials, Web-based programs and related evaluation costs.

Nottingham High School (Hamilton Township, Mercer County) Junior Jon Noel designed the logo for the pilot program. Jon, a creative arts major who also studies at Mercer County Technical Schools' Arthur R. Sypek Center, was recognized yesterday for his contribution during a meeting of the committee that has advised the department regarding the development of the pilot program.

Twenty states - including Delaware - plus the District of Columbia require individual learning plans for all students; another five states encourage their use and provide state support but do not have mandates in place for every student.